Tip of the Month

January 2011

New Lighting Efficiency Standards

As of January 1, 2011, the B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources will be applying new lighting efficiency standards, under B.C.'s Energy Efficiency Act. The new standards will affect the sales of modified spectrum lamps and most screw based incandescent lamps. More specifically, it will affect 75 and 100 W incandescent lamps. The standards will include 40 and 60 W incandescent lamps on December 31, 2012. Some specialty incandescent lamps as well as 25 W and 150 W lamps are exempt from the regulation as they only make up 2% of total sales.

At the moment, the new standards can be met by compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), halogen infrared lamps (HIR) and some light emitting diode (LED) bulbs. Any incandescent lights manufactured after the New Year will have to meet the new efficiency standards.

With the new standards coming into effect, it may be time to switch your incandescent lights for CFLs. Don't know the difference between the two? Check out our table below.

CFLs vs. Incandescent Lights

	CFLs	Incandescent
How It Works	Mercury vapour creates UV rays which excite the phosphor coating inside the lamp, producing light.	Metal filament is heated until it glows, producing light.
Affordability	CFLs cost more to purchase however, prices are dropping as more enter the market.	
Energy Costs	CFLs use 75% less energy and saves approximately $30 on your electricity bill over the span of the bulb's life.	
Longevity	CFLs last eight to ten times longer and only have to be replaced every six to eight years.	
Recycling	CFLs are included in a province-wide recycling program. All mercury, glass and metal is safely removed and recycled. For more information on the program and to locate the nearest drop off location, call the RCBC Recycling Hotline or visit www.productcare.org/lights.	Recycled in areas where private facilities exist. In many cases, the only option is to place it in the garbage. Contact the RCBC Hotline to find out if there is a recycling facility in your area.
Environmental Impact	Mercury is a poisonous, heavy metal which can accumulate in landfills and leach into nearby water bodies.	It takes more energy to light incandescent lamps than CFLs. The largest source of atmospheric mercury is coal-fired energy generation. The power needed to light a CFL creates 2.4mg of mercury pollution, whereas an incandescent lamp creates 10mg.
Human Health	If handled properly, the mercury poses no human health risk. If a lamp breaks and is properly cleaned up, there is little health risk. An average CFL contains 5mg of mercury. In comparison, a thermostat can contain 500-2000mg of mercury.	No known human health impacts.

Need more information?

Contact the **RCBC Recycling Hotline!**

Lower Mainland: 604-732-9253 | BC Toll-Free: 1-800-667-4321

Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm